(b) if so, the loss suffered in terms of life and equipment etc.;

(c) whether an enquiry has been held in the matter; and

(d) the details of steps taken on the conclusion of enquiry?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir. Fire had broken out at solid propellant processing facility of High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL) of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

(b) Six personnel are dead. There is no other singificant loss of property and material.

(c) Yes, Sir. Court of Inquiry is investigating the cause of accident.

(d) Inquiry report is awaited.

Contract with Israel for Conversion of Boeing 737

5105. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that HAL had tied up with Israel to convert Boeing 737 passenger jets into cargo aircraft;

(b) if so, the terms and conditions of the contract;

(c) in what manner this contract would help the country; and

(d) the other contracts that are in the offing?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) Israel Aircraft Industries Limited, Israel has decided to award a contract for supply of 10 shipsets of Kits for Boeing 737 conversion programme plus an option for additional 5 shipsets, to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). Contractual clauses are under finalisation. The first kit is to be supplied by March 2004. Through this contract HAL would be able to enter the international civil aviation market. At present, there is no other such proposal.